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SHIFNAL RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

INTERIM REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF
THE RURAL DISTRICT OF SHIFNAL,
FOR THE YEAR 1942.

Once again, the Ministry of Health has required that the Report on the Health of the District shall be presented in an abbreviated interim form. This being so, exhaustive statistical figures have been avoided and such as are given have been confined to those of a domestic nature and of local interest.

The incidence of Infectious Disease is dealt with under that section of the Report, but the complete absence of diphtheria in eleven months of the year merits attention at this stage. Scarlet Fever gave rise to a considerable number of cases, but showed a decline of about one third on 1941.

Over the Country generally, despite war conditions and the stringency of the times, acute infective diseases have shown little or no rise with the exception of Cerebro-Spinal Fever - a diseases from which this District suffered 2 cases. It may be, however, that that condition associated with the maintainance of the good health of a country - cleanliness - has shown some deterioration. The frequency of Scabies seems to denote a lack of this, and Scabies has been much in mind in the past twelve months.

Turning to that more chronic infective condition - Tuberculosis - over the Country there has been a rise following a pre-war decline which had been continuous from the end of the First War. In some measure to meet this, a system of Mass Radiography has been evolved. To expedite the examination of patients, and at the same time to bring within scope of preventive medicine a large section of adolescence and young adults (20 - 30 age group) a system of X ray photography has been invented which should be the means of bringing to light many unsuspected cases. By this system of mass X ray examination, the time should not be far distant when every adult will be subjected to this examination at the period of greatest susceptibility. The relationship of this disease to your District is dealt with at the end of this Report.

To combat, and further prevent, the Ministry of Health has made arrangements to deal with the possible onset and spread of Typhus Fever - a disease from which this Country is now completely free. The danger of this gaining a foothold lies in the large proportion of our population at present abroad returning to this Country, and coupled with that, the rapid means for

this return. The Continent has not enjoyed this same freedom from Typhus and the danger if thereby emphasised.

Venereal Disease has shown an unwelcomed increase in frequency and has been much discussed. To further prevention, certain measures have been taken by parliament to restrict, principally, the infected female being a cause for further spread, and it is now possible to deal with such cases compulsorily - on report. Much diversity of opinion exists as to the relative weight to be given to medical and moral teachings in attempting to secure eradication.

Small-Pox, an infrequent, but undesired visitor has evidenced itself at periods in the past year. Scotland has been mainly affected, and only rare cases have occurred on this side of the Border, and no epidemics have arisen.

A precautionary measure, new in so far as to its general applicability in this Country has had to be taken in relationship to static water supplies. This, one of the protective weapons used in the defence of the Country, is, by reason of its nature, a possible breeding ground for mosquitoes. The steps to prevent this has been the subject of a memorandum from the Ministry of Health.

Preventive Medicine has become a State Controlled Branch of the Science, and during the Year, much conjecture and publicity has been given to the possibility of taking Medicine generally under the same control, in a socialised form. The opening of Health Centres to deal with all diseases, with attendant Doctors and Specialists as required is envisaged, and while it would appear that some form of service of this nature will result, the shape and scope has still to be agreed and decided. Complementary with the above, the status of those servants of Medicine - Nurses - has received much consideration, and the resultant has been the stabilisation of their system of working and remuneration.

In the immediate neighbourhood, particular attention has been directed to the need for a higher standard of cleanliness in milk. In this connection, preliminary steps have been taken in association with the Local Agricultural College to formulate a scheme for local sampling. It is hoped that by this means it may be possible to eradicate that substratum of milk producers who are at present supplying a liquid of inferior standard of cleanliness.

It is pleasing to note that, as a resultant of the special care and supervision of the diet of the children there has been no adverse effects of the Health and Weight as a result of the War. Among the people generally, better use is being made of the more ordinary foods in the home, and it has been found

possible to live satisfactorily on the restricted rations now in force. The lessening of Neurosis reported over the Country has been ascribed to persons being more fully occupied and busy and free from the fear of unemployment.

The Medical Officer of Health takes this opportunity of thanking your Sanitary Inspector for his close co-operation and constant willingness in carrying out his duties in the Sanitary Department.

POPULATION.

No changes of domestic interest have been noted in the returns of the Ministry recently received.

Certain figures and Statistics supplied
by the Ministry of Health.

	Males.	Females.
Live Births	100	105
Illegitimate Births.	4	4
Still Births.	7	4
Deaths under 1 year of age.	6	5
Deaths (generally)	49	60

Some causes of death:-

Pulmonary Tuberculosis	2
Cancer.	13
Cerebral Haemorrhage.	10
Heart Diseases.	42
Nephritis.	3

There was one death from acute infectious (notifiable)
disease - cerebro- spinal fever.

BACTERIOLOGICAL SERVICE.

This continues to be carried out by the County Bacteriologist, Dr. Rhodes, at the Royal Salop Infirmary, Shrewsbury. The centralisation in this Hospital is now complete and the whole works satisfactorily.

AMBULANCE.

The modern carriage and equipment serves the District well, and is frequently in use. There have been no complaints of this service.

REFUSE COLLECTION.

At the beginning of the year, labour difficulties were experienced but these were able to be overcome and for the greater part of the period, the service functioned smoothly. The aim is a fortnightly collection of

household refuse, and this has been maintained. There have been very few complaints. At Shifnal the tipping site close to the Town is now almost completely filled, and early in 1943 a new site will have to be found for future workings.

In addition to scavenging, the vehicles have been in constant use for collecting salvage. In the year, the return for this was £570.

SHELTERS.

These are subjected to monthly inspections; cleanliness and good repair being the first concern. 1942 saw the completion of the communal shelters at Albrighton. These were erected by the County Council and were then handed over to this Authority. There are four separate shelters.

WATER.

The District continues to be served from the two main centres - the Shifnal and Wolverhampton undertakings. The former system, under the control and management of the Local Authority, has, despite the times, been able to be extended. New connections have been made to Tong School following the recent extensions to that village. In addition a long extension to Cramp Pool Farm, and one to an institution at Sheriffhales have been finished. This last makes close approach to the distributory system of the neighbouring Authority of Oakengates, and the possibility of linkage of the two main supplies in this part is made much easier.

Water from all sources is subjected to periodic analysis, and the results from samples from public supplies have been uniformly good. In addition, a further protection by chlorination is in force.

SEWERS AND SEWERAGE.

The changes contemplated on the disposal works at Shifnal and Albrighton have been unable to be furthered but certain improvements have been made. At Shifnal, new lagoons have been built, these allowing the sludge to dry completely before removal. At Albrighton it is hoped that in 1943 the improvements and extensions to meet the needs of the increased population will be able to be started. The effluents from both plants have been analysed, and that from the Shifnal works has been found to be satisfactory. Use is made of the lands surrounding for the production of vegetables, and from the two sites, good crops have been gathered.

Under the Surveyor's supervision, a new length of sewer has been laid at Beckbury, and, at Sutton Maddock, a new septic tank system has

has been installed to replace the original. This latter serves the Council houses adjacent. At Lilliehurst, a new septic tank with downward filtration has been built to serve a local works.

At Tong, the School, having been connected with the main water system, has had the sanitary accommodation converted for water carriage removal.

Private disposal plants, especially where the properties concerned are being used to house a large number of residents, have been kept under close supervision.

HOUSING.

No extensive changes have been able to be made in the accommodation in the District. Homes have been inspected for cleanliness, and particular control has been exercised over Council Property. Hostels have come within this supervision, and in one instance, a wholesale disinfection of bedding had to be carried out to mitigate the possibility of spread of contagion.

Repairs have been required where necessary, and in the case of the smaller of these have been completed. In this connection, at Shifnal, to safeguard against the further deterioration to the state fit only for demolition, two properties were reconditioned after statutory means had been enforced to secure this.

One house has been condemned.

From time to time properties, not houses, have been found to be in use for human habitation. Two cases of these were investigated with a view to abatement of this practice, and the occupiers were required to move from the buildings.

Under the Evacuation Scheme, close attention has been paid to the premises let for this purpose at Houghton Hall. Under close supervision, some improvement in cleanliness resulted.

MEAT AND FOODS.

This District continues to be served from the Abattoir at Newport. Your Officer reports that the quality of meat sent in has been good. There have been few complaints and little condemnation on re-inspection.

Locally the pig slaughter-house has been subjected to weekly visits for inspection of carcasses and again it has been reported that few condemnations have had to be made.

Control of food preparation, and the maintenance of the required standard of hygiene has necessitated the enforcement of closure of unlicensed premises used for this purpose.

Certain foodstuffs, mainly tinned, have been brought for inspection and opinion, and a quantity has had to be condemned and confiscated. Your Sanitary Inspector has been instructed on the precautions to be taken in assessing the quality of such tinned goods and the steps which must be followed by retailers in their production of such articles.

MILK AND DAIRIES.

Farms and dairies have been visited periodically during the year.

Improvements and reconditioning have been able to be carried out on a cowshed and dairy near Albrighton, but generally there has been no marked re-organisation.

Means to be taken to endeavour to improve the standard of quality of milk from a particular type of farm were discussed with the Milk Officer, Harper Adam's College at the beginning of the year. Sampling, with subsequent examination by Dr. Provan, was suggested, and your Sanitary Inspector initiated this scheme and carried it out for some months. However it was found impracticable to continue owing to shortage of equipment, but it is hoped to re-introduce this in the near future.

Apart from the above-mentioned type of sampling, tests are constantly being made of the general cleanliness in association with the County Health Department.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

It was noted at the beginning of the report that over the Country generally, there has been no increase in the number of acute infective disease notifications. Whilst this District has not, within the past few years, participated in the national stability, there has been a decrease in the total number of cases falling within the group. Measles accounted for 29 notifications, this following a year of prevalence, and the restriction of 24 of these to the first quarter suggests that the epidemic carried its decline into the present year. Albrighton and Sheriffhales were the Districts mainly affected.

Whooping Cough gave rise to two cases only.

Diphtheria after an epidemic year showed a welcome fall, and excepting for the month of November, the year was completely free. In that month

there were two notifications.

It may be that this satisfactory position has been achieved as a result of wholesale immunisation. The campaign to protect, by inoculation, has been carried out intensively and there has been a good response to this service offered free to all classes.

In the course of the year, a change was made in the clinical administration. In May the County Health Department took over control of this, leaving the statistical side still in the hands of the Local Authorities. Except for the above, the same facilities and conveniences as in previous years are offered over the whole area.

In the Returns rendered to the Ministry of Health in December, 55% of children under 5 years, and 85% above that age had taken advantage of the scheme.

There was some diminution in the number of cases of Scarlet Fever, but the total, 28, showed that this disease continued to manifest itself with some frequency. Beckbury had 11 cases, and Sheriffhales and Tong accounted for the greater part of the remainder. At Beckbury, the local school had to be closed for a period as a precautionary measure to mitigate the possibility of further spread. The last six months of the year was the period of incidence.

Pneumonia gave 10 returns, and again the third and fourth quarters were the period of prevalence.

Of other diseases there were 7 cases of Erysipelas, 2 cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever, and 1 case of Puerperal Pyrexia.

In the case of Erysipelas this is above average.

Attention had been drawn during 1941 to the widespread occurrence of Scabies over the Country, and steps had to be taken by the Ministry of Health to advise on methods for control and prevention. As the Centres under the control of the County Health Department had been found to be unable to take all the cases arising in the North Eastern Area, other means had to be resorted to to deal with the many cases brought to notice locally. Through the co-operation of Newport and Wellington Rural District Councils, it was found possible to re-open the Isolation Hospital at Newport. This Institution, after certain reconstructions and improvements, was able to receive both out and in-patients; the latter necessitated by the widespread nature of the Area. This District, a non-participant in the management, agreed to send such of their cases as required

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skilled attention, and this arrangement has been on great benefit.

TUBERCULOSIS.

the numbers on the Register at the end of the year were as follows:-

	Males.		Females.	
	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary.
1941	13	18	21	25
1942.	13	21	20	27

The above denotes no change of significance.

W. A. M. STEWART,

July 24th. 1943.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

